

**MINUTES OF THE ST. MARY'S COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION  
MEETING  
ROOM 14 \* GOVERNMENTAL CENTER \* LEONARDTOWN, MARYLAND  
Monday, February 27, 2006**

Members present were Steve Reeves, Vice Chair; Lawrence Chase; Merl Evans; Brandon Hayden; Susan McNeill; and Howard Thompson. Joseph St. Clair was excused. Department of Land Use and Growth Management (LUGM) staff present was Denis Canavan, Director; Jeff Jackman, Senior Planner IV; Phil Shire, Planner IV; Bob Bowles, Planner II; and Keona Courtney, Recording Secretary. Deputy County Attorney, Heidi Dudderar, was also present.

The Vice Chair called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

To hear and receive testimony and comments regarding a proposed amendment to the document entitled "Quality of Life in St. Mary's County – A Strategy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century", which document serves as the Comprehensive Plan adopted under authority of Article 66B of the Annotated Code of Maryland. The proposed amendment is published in draft form as St. Mary's County Transportation Plan Draft August 2005, and is briefly described as follows: Amend page 105 of the Comprehensive Plan to incorporate the St. Mary's County Transportation Plan to guide future generalized land use and capital improvements.

Present: John Groeger, Department of Public Works and  
Transportation (DPW&T)  
Matt Wolniak, Johnson, Mirmiran & Thompson (JM&T)

Mr. Groeger's Exhibit 1: Memo from John Groeger  
to Denis Canavan dated 12/21/05 regarding County-wide  
Transportation

Plan public input

with written comments attached

Mr. Groeger's Exhibit 2: St. Mary's County  
Transportation Plan Existing Conditions Report dated February 2004

Ms. Russell's Exhibit 1: Letter to Planning  
Commission dated 2/27/06 in support of the proposed Transportation  
Plan

Mr. St. Clair's Exhibit 1: Memo to the Planning  
Commission dated 2/24/06 regarding his comments on MD 4  
and

Wildewood Parkway

Copies of the August 2005 draft Transportation Plan were posted on the County webpage and placed in all branches of the St. Mary's County Public Library. Legal advertisements were published on 2/12/06 and 2/19/06.

Mr. Jackman explained that this proposed amendment to the Comprehensive Plan is authorized under Article 66B of the Maryland Annotated Code of Maryland. He explained that under Section 3.07 (c) of the Code, the Planning Commission is required to schedule a public hearing at least 60 days in advance of the hearing date to allow for a comment period and circulation of the plan under consideration, which the Planning Commission did in September 2005. During the September meeting, the Planning Commission received copies of the August 2005 draft Transportation Plan and it was also provided to adjoining planning jurisdictions and pertinent state agencies. He explained that the Planning Commission will form a recommendation to adopt the Plan as it exists or as revised and forward the recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC). A copy of the August 2005 draft Transportation Plan can be found on the County's website at:

<http://www.co.saint-marys.md.us/dpw/transit/transportationplan.asp>

Mr. Groeger, Deputy Director of DPW&T, explained that the first of two transportation phases was presented to the Planning Commission in July 2003. The Existing Conditions Report outlines the County's transportation state as of 2002, and addresses all phases of transportation including roadway capacity, safety, transit, pedestrians and bicyclists, travel by air and water, and horse and buggy traffic. The Report was finalized in April 2004, and the Transportation Plan was started then. Mr. Groeger explained that the draft Plan projects the County's transportation conditions for the year 2025, and provides recommendations for improvements to the transportation system. DPW&T has been working closely with the JM&T consultant to draft the Plan, and has coordinated with other County agencies.

Mr. Groeger explained that all major Lexington Park Development Plan (LPDP) improvements are included in the Plan. DPW&T forwarded copies of the draft Plan to the BOCC in the beginning of 2005, and presented the Plan to them in April 2005. The BOCC requested that DPW&T address their comments and afterwards a draft copy was forwarded to all County agencies on the distribution list and to the Planning Commission in August 2005. He stated that DPW&T has received comments from Maryland Department of Transportation, State Highway Administration (SHA), Charles County Government, and St. Mary's County Recreation, Parks, and Community Services (RP&CS). Comments were also received from JM&T. Frank and Christine Allen are the only citizens who have commented on the draft Plan so far. Mr. Groeger explained that the memo dated December 21, 2005 summarized all comments received regarding the draft Plan, and provided recommendations for addressing the comments. He noted that the

Maryland Department of Transportation provided favorable comments about the draft Plan. Mr. Groeger explained that if the Plan is adopted, then DPW&T can use it as a guide in transportation planning in the future. The Plan can also give DPW&T better authority to require that developers along proposed roadway routes make improvements to the routes, honor the routes, dedicate and reserve right-of-ways, and perhaps build sections of roadways.

Mr. Wolniak explained that the population of the County is projected to increase from the year 2000 calculation of 86,211 to 120,000 by the year 2025, and that an increase of 17,000 jobs is projected. He explained that increases in population and jobs lead to an increase in traffic on roadways. Traffic has increased on some of the major roadways by 30 to 60 percent. He explained that there are only three major roadways in and out of the County and that JM&T has tried to address future growth by developing an integrated Plan that has various elements. The various elements include:

- Roadway Components
- Short Term Improvements
- Medium Range Improvements
- Long Range Improvements
- Travel Demand Management
- Mass Transit
- Park and Ride Lots
- Pedestrians and Bicyclists
- Air Facilities
- Water Access Points

Roadway Components. Mr. Wolniak explained that State, County, and Municipal roadways are studied to see how they function independently and together to move people throughout the County. He explained that JM&T has considered which roadways cause safety concerns, traffic volumes, and the levels of service (LOS). They gathered all of the existing traffic data for the County and found that traffic volumes range from a few vehicles per day on local roadways to over 55,000 vehicles per day on MD 235; between MD 4 and MD 237, which has the highest traffic volume in the County.

Short Term Improvements. Mr. Wolniak explained some of the recommended improvements to help County roadways function better such as the widening of MD 237 to four lanes, including provisions for sidewalks and bicycle lanes, extending Pacific Drive to Pegg Road, providing a connection between the Wal-Mart and K-Mart shopping centers to reduce trips on MD 235, extending Lei Drive to Shangri-la Drive to provide additional access and to improve circulation in Lexington Park, improving MD 5 from MD 245 to MD 243, realigning Strickland Road to connect with MD 237 and Pegg Road to provide alternate access, extending Pegg Road from MD 237 to MD 5 to reduce traffic volume and provide alternate access, and

looking at access management along MD 5 and MD 235 to limit the number of access points to these roadways and the number of potential accidents.

Medium Range Improvements. Mr. Wolniak explained that one of the major congestion areas in the County is at the MD 4 and MD 235 interchange, and this is projected to operate at a failing LOS. He explained some of recommended improvements for this area such as constructing an interchange option known as the urban diamond to move traffic through the area and relieve congestion; constructing FDR Boulevard from MD 4 to Willows Road, including a linkage to MD 235 to offset the local trips; expanding the Thomas Johnson Bridge from two lanes to four lanes, and then widening MD 4 from MD 5 to four lanes; extending St. John's Road and Lawrence Hayden Road to MD 4 at Indian Bridge Road to provide an alternate access since a lot of growth is projected for the Wildewood area, and to operate as a connector to service various residential developments; and widening MD 5 from MD 245 to MD 249 from two to four lanes.

Long Range Improvements. Mr. Wolniak explained some additional recommended improvements such as widening the access point onto the base from two to four lanes and constructing a parallel service road along MD 5 between Mechanicsville and Mohawk Drive to reduce traffic and divert traffic off of MD 5. Other recommended improvements include extending Pacific Drive to Bradley Boulevard, constructing Bay Ridge Road as an extension of Bradley Boulevard, and extending Carver School Boulevard to Bay Ridge Road. Linkage roads between the extensions are also recommended. Mr. Wolniak added that they are also looking at a ring road around northern Leonardtown to connect to MD 5. Mr. Reeves asked if a site has been selected for the parallel service road, because he is concerned about the congestion in Charlotte Hall. He explained that business is very intense along MD 5 in this area. Mr. Groeger explained that the road has not been mapped, and no planning has been done for the service road.

Mr. Thompson asked how serious the State is about expanding the Thomas Johnson Bridge. Mr. Groeger explained that this is a very expensive project, estimated to cost approximately \$130 million, and that he does not foresee it taking place any time soon. He explained that the project was recently placed on the State's needs list, but could take 20-25 years until it is built. Mr. Groeger explained that the project could possibly be accelerated if there is a Navy realignment, or if everyone is agreement about it. Mr. Thompson expressed concern about emergency evacuations. He explained that a lot of people use the Benedict Bridge, and that the County should be prepared. Mr. Groeger explained that he often sees traffic accumulating on MD 235, due to traffic waiting to get over the Bridge. He stated that he only sees the matter getting worse in the years to come.

Ms. McNeill asked if the BOCC can reorder the priority list of projects, and asked the Planning Commission if they want to consider reordering the list. Mr. Reeves said that the Planning Commission can decide to leave the record open, look at all of the information given, and return to the next meeting with comments.

Ms. McNeill explained that she feels that the Planning Commission should not have to accept the order given for the priority list. Mr. Wolniak explained that the order of the priority list was simply a recommendation, and that the Planning Commission should feel free to reconsider the order of the list.

Travel Demand Management. Mr. Wolniak explained that the purpose of this is to reduce the number of trips and single occupant vehicles by providing commuter options such as ridesharing and Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH), employer outreach, tele-commuting, biking and walking to work, expanding bus service, and the multi-mode approach. He explained that the County transit system serves approximately 324,000 riders per year and Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) also has routes throughout the County.

Mass Transit. Mr. Wolniak explained the recommended improvements for this such as expanding new routes in the County, increasing the frequency of use for popular routes, providing bus stop amenities, connecting transit and park and ride lots, and considering the possibility of a light rail system or bus rapid transit system.

Pedestrians and Bicyclists. Mr. Wolniak recommended that the County design standards to provide for wider lanes on roadways for bicyclists and connect activity between schools, parks, and bicycle trails. He explained that sidewalk locations should also be considered in development districts.

Air Facilities. Mr. Wolniak explained the recommendations for the Captain Walter Francis Duke Regional Airport which include extending the runway to 5,350 feet to allow for commuter air service. He explained that certain Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) guidelines must be considered when extending a runway such as this one to provide for the safe operation of aircrafts.

Water Access Points. Mr. Wolniak explained the recommendations associated with water access points such as upgrading existing water landings, providing more access and more boat landings, considering beach and canoe access, and considering potential ferry service.

The Vice Chair opened the hearing to public comment.

Ella May Russell, Director of the St. Mary's County Department of Social Services, explained that the Department supports the Plan. The Department is particularly concerned about the bus system and STS system, since they are in contact with citizens of the community who are seeking employment in the County. She explained that transportation is something that definitely matters to these individuals who may be working in entry level jobs in the service industry such as retail, fast food, and restaurants. Ms. Russell explained that some individuals have been unable to gain employment because they are unable to get to work on Sundays. The Department has been advised by many employers that Sunday is a critical day for their businesses, and for scheduling employees. The Department

has partnered with DPW&T since fiscal year 1999, and has provided federal funds toward the STS bus system. She explained that these funds were used to extend the STS bus service from 6pm to 11pm. She stated that the Department is particularly interested in how to implement a Sunday bus service.

The Vice Chair closed the hearing to public comment.

**The Planning Commission conducted and closed a public hearing, voting to leave the public response period open for ten days.**

Mr. Hayden asked if the priorities of the project list are consistent with the Economic Development Council's priorities that are developed annually. Mr. Groeger said that he was not sure if this priority list was coordinated with the Tri-County Counsel for Southern Maryland, but explained that there are different priority lists that go to the State. He explained that SHA advised DPW&T that they have a better chance of funding if they set priorities and keep them current with SHA needs. He explained that the priorities are subject to change on an annual basis.

Since Mr. St. Clair was unable to attend the meeting, he asked that his comments concerning MD 4 and Wildewood Parkway be read into the minutes. Mr. Thompson read the following comments on behalf of Mr. St. Clair:

“In my opinion, the intersection of MD Route 4 and Wildewood Parkway does not function well at today's traffic volumes. The design was most likely adequate for the very first phases of development and at that time this entrance was the only access to the site. My recent observation noted a need for a by-pass lane on MD Route 4 eastbound. It is my recommendation that the County/SHA review the Wildewood Parkway and MD Route 4 intersection to safely handle the increased Wildewood traffic utilizing this entrance. Review should include the need for a by-pass lane, striping, and added length to the acceleration and deceleration lanes. Review should be reported back to the PC.”

**DEVELOPMENT REVIEW**

**CCSP #05-132-051 – ABBERLY CREST APARTMENTS, PHASE II**

The applicant is requesting review and approval of a concept site plan for Phase II, a 240 unit apartment complex. The property contains 65.03 acres; is zoned Residential High-Density District (RH); and is located on the east side of Willows Road, approximately 7,000 feet south of its intersection with MD Route 246; Tax Map 51, Grid 11, Parcel 618.

Owner: H.H. Hunt  
Present: Charlie Kreye, Draper Aden Associates

Mr. Bowles explained that Phase I of the project is near completion and has a total of 252 units. The project is located in the Lexington Park Development District (LPDD) within a community served by existing facilities such as: roads, water, sewer, stores, and schools. Mr. Bowles explained that the proposed units for Phase II are similar to the existing multi-family residential units constructed in Phase I.

Mr. Kreye explained that this site will have 10 buildings, and that Phase II will be located on the back of the property which is fairly secluded. He explained that there is an existing wooded buffer along the back of the property, which was created in Phase I. Phase I includes an administration building, pool houses, and support facilities, but Phase II is only for living units. Ms. McNeill asked what the rent range is for Phase I. Mr. Cook replied that the rent ranges from approximately \$800 to \$1,200.

**Mr. Thompson moved that having accepted the staff report, dated February 16, 2006, and having made a finding that the objectives of Section 60.5.3 of the St. Mary's County Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance have been met, and noting that the referenced project has met all requirements for concept approval as a prerequisite for final site plan approval, the Planning Commission grant concept site plan approval. The motion was seconded by Ms. McNeill and passed by a 6-0 vote.**

**CCSP #05-132-015 – JOSEPH HAYDEN, LOT 2**

The applicant is requesting review and approval of a concept site plan for an 18,000 square foot office building. The property contains 2.00 acres; is zoned Village Center Mixed Use District (VMX); and is located on Heathers Lane in Callaway, Maryland; Tax Map 50, Grid 16, Parcel 37.

Owner: Joseph Hayden  
Present: Jerry Nokleby, Nokleby Surveying, Inc.

Mr. Bowles explained that the proposed project is located in the Callaway Village Center, and that water and sewer service is available to the site. He explained that the project will contribute to the need for professional office space in the Center, and will not adversely affect any residential communities or landscapes.

Mr. Nokleby explained that the site will connect to the water and sewer system located in front of the property. He explained that the site is not going to be heavily developed, and that approximately 50 percent of the space will be used by the Adam Brother's Construction Company, while the other 50 percent may be leased as office space.

**Mr. Evans moved that having accepted the staff report, dated February 17, 2006, and having made a finding that the objectives of Section 60.5.3 of the St. Mary's County Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance have been met, and noting that the referenced project has met all requirements for concept approval, the Planning Commission grant concept site plan approval. The motion was seconded by Mr. Thompson and passed by a 6-0 vote.**

**CCSP #05-132-030 – LAUREL GLEN SHOPPING CENTER, ADDITION**

The applicant is requesting review and approval of a concept site plan for a 28,727 square foot retail addition. The property contains 25.75 acres; is zoned Community Commercial District (CC), Planned Unit Development (PUD); and is located at 45315 Alton Lane in California, Maryland; Tax Map 34, Grid 24, Parcel 99.

Owner: Laurel Glen, Inc.  
Present: Dan Ichniowski, NG&O Engineering, Inc.

Mr. Shire explained that this is the same shopping center that contains K-Mart and Food Lion. The end units shown on the site plan represent the build-out of the Center. The last end unit is a fenced garden center that does not have a roof and therefore was not included in the square footage of this site. Mr. Evans asked if this site will result in complete build-out of the Center. Mr. Shire explained that he is not aware of any other planned pad sites.

Mr. Ichniowski explained that the Center was originally approved as a PUD in 1986, and that the existing structures on the property were constructed in 1989. He explained that this is the last pad site at this location. A tractor supply store is proposed for 24,727 square feet of the site, and an adjacent retail addition will make up the remaining 4,000 square feet of the site. Mr. Ichniowski stated that much of the infrastructure on the site was built at the same time as the original Center.

**Mr. Chase moved that having accepted the staff report, dated February 17, 2006, and having made a finding that the objectives of the original Planned Unit Development Plan have been met, and noting that the referenced project has met all requirements for concept approval, the Planning Commission grant concept site plan approval. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hayden and passed by a 6-0 vote.**

**DISCUSSION**

**WILDEWOOD UPDATE**

Mr. Shire explained that the following projects were not being brought to the Planning Commission for approval, but simply for informational purposes. He explained that in 1998 a minor amendment to the Wildewood PUD was approved

to provide the Planning Commission with an annual PUD update. An update may also be provided by the developers for every 36 dwelling units. Prior to the amendment, PUD updates were provided to the Planning Commission twice every year. Mr. Shire explained that development has been progressing rapidly in the Wildewood PUD since the 1998 amendment, and that LUGM has had discussions with at least two out of the three Wildewood developers about providing frequent PUD updates to the Planning Commission.

#### **# 05-132-003 - CHEESEBURGER IN PARADISE**

Mr. Shire explained that this site plan has been through Technical Evaluation Committee (TEC) review, and that most of the TEC items have been addressed. The site plan is almost ready for signature approval, and upon approval the applicant can apply for the proper permits. Mr. Shire explained that Cheeseburger in Paradise is a subsidiary company of Outback Steakhouse, Inc., and that the site will be located inside of the Wildewood Center's middle entrance. He noted that during the March TEC review LUGM received a concept site plan for Chuck E. Cheese's to be located on the south side of Cheeseburger in Paradise. Mr. Shire explained that the proposals for the Wildewood Center have not exceeded the limits of the PUD Plan. The floor areas of the two proposed sites have been calculated and compared to existing sites and previously approved sites in the Wildewood PUD, and they are not close to reaching the Plan's 50 percent floor area ratio cap. He explained that as long as there are sufficient parking spaces in the Center then LUGM can approve the proposals.

#### **#05-132-040 - WILDEWOOD WOODLAKE APARTMENTS, PHASE II**

Mr. Shire explained that Phase I of the project is constructed and fully occupied. The site will be aligned with FDR Boulevard, and that the extension of FDR Boulevard will represent the northern linkage of MD 4 and MD 235. The alignment of FDR Boulevard and crossing of the railroad right-of-way was approved by the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) last year. Mr. Shire explained that the proposed site for Phase II will be located above FDR Boulevard, and will contain 136 residential units. Access to the site will be via Wildewood Parkway and/or White Oak Parkway until the FDR Boulevard extension is complete. Mr. Chase asked if the developer is going to construct the FDR Boulevard extension, and Mr. Shire explained that it will be paid for by the developer.

#### **WILDEWOOD STURBRIDGE CONDOMINIUMS**

Mr. Shire explained that this site will be located below FDR Boulevard. There will be 208 residential units within seven buildings on the proposed site, and access will be via the FDR Boulevard extension. Mr. Shire explained that the development of both the Woodlake Apartments and Sturbridge Condominiums is a critical component in the transportation system.

### **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

Mr. Shire explained that the completion of FDR Boulevard should relieve traffic at the intersection of MD 4 and MD 235. Mr. Evans asked if there will be a signal installed at the intersection of FDR Boulevard. Mr. Shire explained that a signal will eventually be installed at the intersection of FDR Boulevard and MD 235. He explained that both he and Mr. Groeger have heard that a signal is planned and warranted for this intersection, but they have not received any details about it. He said that he is going to contact SHA about this.

Mr. Shire explained that LUGM has reviewed a concept site plan for a shopping center near Bay Center, and that the proposed shopping center's only access will be via the FDR Boulevard extension. Mr. Evans asked if access via MD 235 will go away for the existing properties in this area. Mr. Shire explained that both the Bay Center and access via MD 235 will go away. He explained that the developer is working on obtaining another access for the proposed shopping center, but that these details have not been worked out. Access is still being considered via FDR Boulevard.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

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Keona L. Courtney  
Recording Secretary

Approved in open session: March  
13, 2006

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Steve Reeves  
Vice Chair